

Chapter 19

The Lord Almighty Reigns

- A. Hallelujah!
 - a. The word is found 4 times in first six verses
 - b. It is a Hebrew word (haleluyah) that was transliterated into Greek first (hallelouia) and then into English (hallelujah).
 - c. Some translations (for instance, the KJV) have the word "Alleluia".
 - d. It is a compound word of two Hebrew words meaning "praise" (halal) and "Jehovah" (Yahweh). Often times in our English Bibles the term is translated "Praise the Lord"
 - e. The English word is only found here while the original term is found both here and 24 times in the Psalms.
- B. Chapter 19 is the culmination of the "mini-series" of chapters 17, 18, and 19 that expresses in greater detail the fall of Babylon (Rome).
 - a. This chapter is a heartfelt expression of worship to God for fulfilling his promise.
 - b. The Hallelujah's of chapter 19 express praise to God for two things:
 - i. What He has done
 - ii. Who He is

THE FOURFOLD HALLELUJAH (19:1-6)

- C. These first six verses take the reader to the heart of the matter – the very reason the Revelation was given to the early Christians.
 - a. It expresses God's fulfilled promise to defeat His and His people's enemies
 - b. It expresses God's fulfilled promise to avenge His people
 - c. It expresses joy that righteousness and truth have, once again, prevailed!
- D. Verse 1
 - a. The first verses of chapter 19 are a response to the charge given in 18:20
 - b. In the original text, the definite article "the" (hē) precedes the words "salvation," "glory," and "power" conveying the idea that these things are exclusively God's; the Empire did not possess them as they thought.
- E. Verse 2

- a. The reason for these exalted expressions is revealed clearly – because His judgments are true and righteous.
 - i. This is such a staggering contrast to the judgments of humanity.
 - ii. While we may make “right” decisions and choices, too often our judgments are flawed. God alone sees the soul of man and knows what is needed to pass down the perfect judgment.
- b. The expression then turns to the specific – he rightly judged the harlot and avenged the blood of His servants.
 - i. The great harlot, again, being Rome

F. Verse 3

- a. “smoke rises up forever and ever”
 - i. Once again the reader is reminded that the judgment of Rome would be permanent.

G. Verse 4

- a. The “twenty-four elders” and the “four living creatures”
 - i. We are transported back again to Chapter 4 (4:4-6) – to the throne room where these same ones assembled around the throne are once again worshipping God.
 - ii. This is the last time we will see them in Revelation.
 - iii. In their last appearance, both groups show their utmost adoration of God and loudly voice their approval and agreement with God’s judgment by crying “Amen. Hallejuah!” – “Let it be so. Praise Jehovah!”
 - iv. They praised God for what He had done.

H. Verse 5

- a. The first four verses of Chapter 19 seem to focus on praise to God for what He had done.
- b. Here, the focus shifts to praise for who He is...
- c. We do not know for sure who said this from the throne – most likely, based on context, not God or Jesus. Perhaps an angel?
- d. “Fear”
 - i. Fear in the sense of “awe” or “respect” not “frightful”
- e. “The small and great”

- i. An all-encompassing phrase that shows every Christian (and truly every person) should praise God for what he has done and who He is!

I. Verse 6

- a. "A great multitude"
 - i. The sound was powerful and magnificent
- b. "Lord" - here meaning "master" or "ruler"
- c. "Almighty"
 - i. The word used here is found 9 times in Revelation and only one other time in the remainder of the NT
 - ii. The word literally means "one who holds all things in his control"; we might use the word "omnipotent."
- d. "reigns"
 - i. Once again, the Revelation shows that God has been and always will be in control and on His throne ruling!
- e. The truth of all that is being said here gave first-century Christians a renewed sense of hope that in the midst of their trials, they could have faith in a better tomorrow.

THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB (19:7-10)

- J. This section of Revelation weaves together no less than 3 strands of Old Testament thought
 - a. First is the symbolism of marriage to illustrate the relationship between God and mankind
 - i. In the OT, Israel was depicted as being married to God (Is. 50:1, Jer. 2:32, Hos. 2:19,20)
 - ii. The imagery is repeated in the NT (Mt. 9:15; Mk 2:19; Jn 3:29)
 - 1. The church is spoken of by Paul as the "bride of Christ" (2 Cor. 11:2)
 - 2. The strongest image, perhaps, from Paul is in Ephesians 5:25-32
 - iii. The marriage bond is the God-created strongest bond between two human beings on this earth...and what it should be at it best and purest is the relationship that God has with His people
 - b. Second, a meal or feast used as a figure of fellowship and rejoicing
 - i. In the OT, this imagery was used to prophesy the universality of the blessings of Christianity (see Isaiah 25:6-8)

- ii. Jesus used similar terminology in Luke 13:29 when he said that men will come from all over to “recline at the table in the kingdom of God.”
 - iii. Table fellowship is by far one of the more intimate interactions between human beings
 - 1. While “eating” is commonplace, “fellowship” is special and to be treasured
 - c. Thirdly is the imagery of putting on clothing to represent a change in behavior
 - i. In the OT, this image was used (see Gen. 35:2; Is. 52:1; 61:10; Zech. 3:4)
 - ii. Paul told in the NT that we are to “put off” sinful ways and “put on” Christ and righteousness (Rom. 13:12,14; Eph. 4:22,24; Col. 3:8-10)
- K. To understand how each of these symbolic strands plays together in Revelation, we must take a closer look at Jewish marriage customs
- a. Betrothal
 - i. Preceding betrothal, arrangements were made by the parents of the bride and groom – often while they were very young
 - ii. Betrothal was like an engagement, but much more binding
 - iii. Once a woman was betrothed she was considered his wife even though the ceremony had not taken place and the marriage had not been consummated (see Gen. 29:21)
 - iv. At this point, she was expected to be faithful and the relationship could only end in death or divorce.
 - v. Take a look at Matthew 1:18 to get a picture of this kind of relationship – “Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.”
 - 1. We also know that according to vs. 19 that Joseph considered divorcing her, but the angel appeared and explained what he was to do.
 - 2. A couple of important notes about the text here –
 - a. In Matthew 1:20 and 24, the English translations often have the word “as” inserted in regards to the phrases “your wife” and “his wife” respectively.
 - b. But the original text literally says “take Mary your wife” and “took his wife” respectively – Mary was considered Joseph’s wife already by society.

- vi. Betrothal could be long or short depending on the circumstances.
 - 1. This period of “waiting” was characterized by purity and preparation
 - 2. The bride made ready her wedding garments
 - 3. The groom might pay a dowry
- b. The Wedding
 - i. It was a time of celebration with friends and family
 - ii. The banquet might last a week or two
 - iii. Often wedding garments were provided for guests that did not have them (we see this example used in Matthew 22:11,12)
 - iv. Following the ceremony, the groom would then take the bride home
- c. The imagery of Jewish marriage customs is used throughout the NT to show the special relationship between Jesus and His followers.
 - i. The price Jesus paid for His bride was His own blood (Acts 20:28)
 - ii. When we are baptized, we become part of the church and therefore part of the bride (Acts. 2:47; 1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 1:22,23)
 - iii. We are living in a period of “betrothal” waiting for the bridegroom to come and take us home...but make no mistake, we are part of a spiritual marriage.
 - iv. Eventually Christ will return to take home those who have been faithful to Him – remained pure – until death.
 - v. Our wedding feast will last for all eternity as we dwell with the Lord in heaven.
- d. These images of a marriage, a wedding, a feast and garments show us a beautiful picture of the spiritual relationship between God and His people.

L. Verse 7

- a. The multitude praised God for what he had done (vs. 1-4), who he was and what he was doing (vv. 5,6) and now they praise him for what He had promised to do.
- b. “the marriage of the Lamb has come” – the time has come to go home; your reward of heaven awaits!
- c. Joy is by far the most common emotion when it comes to weddings...regardless of society, ritual, culture, or custom.
 - i. The return of the Lamb for those who are ready will be a time of great joy...the end of verse 7 seems to emphasize that.

M. Verse 8

- a. This verse focuses on one aspect of the preparation – providing the wedding garments
 - i. The bride wears the wedding garment, but the garment is identified as “the righteous acts of the saints”
 - ii. The bride is “the saints” or “the church”
- b. What was the garment like?
 - i. Fine linen, bright, and clean – a symbol of purity
 - ii. A great contrast to the apparel of the harlot in Chapter 17 (purple and scarlet; adorned with precious stones and jewels)
- c. Two thoughts are blended here:
 - i. God’s part in our salvation
 1. Highlighted by the words “it was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen”
 2. These words once again reinforce the idea that God is in control
 3. As Christians, we do not “clothe” ourselves with Christ, God does
 - a. We do not cleanse our “soul-garment” as white as snow, God does.
 4. By God’s mercy, we are cleansed.
 5. God provides the means, the opportunity and the strength to be cleansed
 - ii. Our part in our salvation
 1. But just because God “does the work” doesn’t mean effort is not required on our part.
 2. The words “the righteous acts of the saints” are a good indicator of that – we participate in the plan!
 3. The term “righteous acts” is translated from a single Greek word – diakaiōma; this term literally translates to refer to the fulfillment of a requirement.
 4. As saints we are required to fulfill our obligations to the laws of God.
 - iii. Burton Coffman once wrote that the God gave the bride the garments, but she had to put them on!

N. Verse 9

- a. “Then he said to me” – based on the original language and context most likely an angel.

- b. The speaker tells John to “write”
 - i. We are reminded again that John wasn’t simply experiencing this Revelation, he was recording it.
 - ii. He was instructed to write, “Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.”
 - 1. This is the 4th “beatitude” in Revelation and it is central to the overall concept of the Revelation itself.
 - 2. There is no greater longing or desire than for one to be part of the wedding celebration in heaven.
 - a. All have been invited; only some will accept and be able to attend.
 - iii. Some believe there is a conflict here between depicting the church first as “the bride” and then depicting them as “the guests”
 - 1. But the NT is consistent in this manner (see Rom. 7:2-4; 2 Cor. 11:2; Ephesians 5:23-33; and Matt. 9:15;25:1)
- c. The speaker, as if to emphasize the importance of what has just been said, utters the statement, “These are true words of God.”

O. Verse 10

- a. Upon hearing the great truths of verses 7 through 9, John “fell at his feet to worship him.”
 - i. John, perhaps overcome with emotion for all that he had seen and heard up to this point, falls at the feet of this angel to worship him! Certainly not something John should have done...so much so that the speaker responds to this...
 - ii. “Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus.”
 - 1. The speaker corrected John’s actions as they were inappropriate; we worship God/Christ, not angels or fellow servants/slaves.
 - 2. “testimony of Jesus”
 - a. This expression has been seen before in 1:2,9
 - b. Mostly likely this phrase refers to the “gospel” or the Scriptures
 - 3. The speaker then tells John to “worship God”; the language and the context powerfully express the fact that God and God alone is to be

worshipped – not an empire, a government, an emperor or material possessions!

- b. "For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy"
 - i. Prophecy is essentially inspired teaching
 - ii. This phrase in verse 10 has been debated and interpreted numerous times over the years.
 - 1. Some interpret 'spirit' in the sense of the 'Holy Spirit'
 - 2. Some translations use the word 'inspiration' instead of 'spirit'
 - 3. Based on context and the original word in Greek (pneuma) most likely 'spirit' is used here to mean the real sense or significance of something – i.e., the spirit of the law.
 - 4. The word 'essence' might be a good substituted word here
 - iii. But ultimately the emphasis is on the word 'Jesus' not 'spirit'
 - 1. At the heart of all things is Christ
 - 2. For the Christian, what matters most is that Christ is the essence of what we are, what we do, and the inspired teachings and writings of the Scriptures.

THE FAITHFUL AND TRUE ON A WHITE HORSE (19:11-16)

- P. Verses 7 through 10 revolve around the wedding of the Lamb
 - a. The reader is being prepared for the coming of the bridegroom that is Christ
 - b. Jesus does appear, but not perhaps in the expected form!
 - i. He is shown as a warrior king
 - c. Verses 11 through 21 are all about VICTORY
 - i. Over the enemies of Christ and His church
 - ii. Over the beast (Roman Empire) and the false prophet (the Empire's loyal followers) along with their allies
 - iii. The enemies of the Lamb (Christ) and His church have been introduced to us in this order in Revelation:
 - 1. The dragon (Satan) – 12:3
 - 2. The sea beast (Roman Empire) and the land beast (a.k.a the false prophet – the Empire's loyal followers) – 13:1,11

3. Babylon the great (Rome) – 14:8; 16:19; 17:1,5
- iv. They are destroyed in the reverse order:
 1. Babylon in chapters 17 and 18
 2. The two beasts in chapter 19
 3. The dragon in chapter 20

Q. Verse 11

- a. "And I saw heaven opened"
 - i. All of heaven is now exposed for John's viewing and so that the glory of God might be revealed to its fullest
- b. John sees a "white horse" and the rider called "Faithful and True"
 - i. While the rider of the white horse in chapter 6 is often debated, this rider of this white horse is quite obvious...it is Christ.
 - ii. The "white horse" has always been a symbol of the conqueror (not surrender like the white flag). It was an indication of victory
 - iii. In 3:14, Jesus was called "the faithful and true Witness" – here just "faithful and true" are needed
 1. God/Christ is "faithful" and "true" to the promises made – the reward the righteous; to judge the wicked.
- c. "In righteousness He judges and wages war"
 - i. Jesus came the first time as Savior; He will return as Judge
 - ii. But His judgment will be pure and righteous; perfectly just
- d. But perhaps the question, in the middle of this passage, comes to our minds again: is this referring to the judgment upon Rome or the Second Coming final judgment?
 - i. In a very real sense, the passage can – and most likely does – contain both.
 - ii. For the 1st century Christians, their immediate concern was Rome and its outcome in light of their wickedness and sin
 - iii. However, for all Christians, regardless of time or place, the Second Coming is always relevant. It stands as a reminder that there is no enemy mighty enough to stand against God; in the end, all who oppose Him will fall.

R. Verse 12

- a. Jesus' eyes are described as being "flame of fire" – much like 1:14
- b. On His head are many "diadems" or "crowns"

- i. Earlier, Jesus was shown with a “stephanos” or “crown of victory (14:14)
 - ii. Here, however, He is described as wearing a “diadem” or “ruling crown”
 - iii. Also, He wears “many” of them, not simply one.
- c. Here the designation that “He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself” is given.
- i. The words “on Him” have been added by some translators, but the original language gives no such distinction...so we really don’t know where this name was written.
 - ii. Ironically, many waste pages speculating on a name that the text clearly states “no one knows”

S. Verse 13

- a. Next, the reader is told that Jesus was “clothed with a robe dipped in blood.”
- i. Some ancient manuscripts have the word “sprinkled” rather than “dipped.” Regardless, there is blood on the robe.
 - ii. The “blood” may refer to one of three possible things – although one makes more sense than the others based on context:
 1. The blood of martyrs, whom Jesus was avenging
 2. The blood of Jesus himself, through which the victory was/will be won
 3. The blood of the enemies of Christ/God
 - a. This one seems to fit the imagery best as well as the context
 - b. It fits a similar passage found in Isaiah 63 (see verse 2) which pictures God with a garment seemingly dipped in blood upon His return from taking vengeance on Israel’s enemy. The prophet asks why His robe looks like this; His response is so:

I have trodden the wine trough alone, and from the peoples there was no man with Me. I also trod them in My anger and trampled them in My wrath; and their lifeblood is sprinkled on My garments, and I stained all My raiment. (Isaiah 63:3)

- c. Just two verses later will the winepress be mentioned here in Rev. 19 and the context of our study.
- d. The tense here in the original language is one of continuing action.

4. But ultimately, whose blood it belongs to is not necessary to know to understand the basic message: the rider on the white horse is a battle-scarred veteran and a warrior.
- b. The text goes on to identify the rider very specifically – His name is called The Word of God.
 - i. The word “Word” is the Greek word logos
 - ii. This is one of the distinct designations of Christ in the writings of John – the only one to refer to Him with this term (see John 1:1, 14; 1 John 1:1).

T. Verse 14

- a. John further describes the scene
 - i. “And the armies which are in heaven clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses.”
 - ii. There has been debate over the years about who the army is exactly:
 1. Some say saints who have gone on to heaven
 - a. However, we are not given an indication in Scripture anywhere else that saints will wage war upon entering a heavenly rest.
 2. Some believe God’s angels
 - a. This makes more sense since we know that angels are called into service to God in many ways – including spiritual warfare (see passages like Joshua 5:14,14; 1 Kings 22:19; 1 Chron. 12:22; Daniel 7:10; Matthew 26:53)
 - iii. But regardless of who the army was, they were following Jesus as HE fights the battle and destroys evil!

U. Verse 15

- a. Verse 15 goes on to emphasize that it is Jesus who subdues His enemies
- b. The symbols of this verse have been used before throughout the Book of Revelation
 - i. Sword from His mouth (1:16; 2:12)
 - ii. The rod (2:27; 12:5)
 - iii. The winepress (14:19)
- c. It is Jesus who is shown to be the one to judge, to punish and destroy evil and the wicked one!

- i. While many would love to ignore the fact that with justice comes both reward and punishment, the fact remains that Christ will bring both when he returns to judge mankind.

V. Verse 16

- a. The climax of the scene comes with a further revelation of the Rider on the white horse – “King of kings and Lord of lords.”
 - i. The name was written both on the robe and His thigh – conspicuous and easily seen by everyone
- b. The name itself
 - i. A sacred designation found at various places and in various ways throughout the Bible
 - 1. “God of gods and Lord of lords” by Moses in Deut. 10:17 and Nebuchadnezzar to Daniel in Daniel 2:47
 - 2. Paul referred to God as “King of kings and Lord of lords” in 1 Tim. 6:15
 - 3. Given the fact that it is applied here to Christ only goes to emphasize Christ’s divinity – He IS God!
 - 4. Revelation 17:14 also made mention of this great name!
 - ii. The name showed that no man can be called this – even though he may try just as the emperors did.
 - iii. While there may be many rulers in the world, only ONE is King of all!

THE BIRDS CALLED TO EAT FLESH (19:17,18)

W. An angel speaks again

- a. He “stands in the sun” where he can be seen; it may also indicate the importance of the message itself.
- b. He cries out with a loud voice so that all may hear the message!
- c. “Birds which fly in midheaven”
 - i. Often the large, strong-winged birds
 - ii. Often carnivorous
 - iii. They circle high above the ground looking for food – and the supply was now plenty
- d. “The flesh...”

- i. The word "the" is not found in the original Greek, only the word "flesh"
 - ii. In fact, the original word "sarkas" is plural and could be more accurately translated "bodies" or even "corpses"
- e. The overall scene is gruesome at the least
 - i. A blood-soaked field piled high with broken bodies and birds eating away at the flesh of those corpses
 - ii. Jesus told us in Matthew 24:28 that "wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather..."
- f. "...the great supper of God..."
 - i. Known as it was provided by God
 - ii. Notice the "menu"
 - 1. Kings
 - 2. Mighty Men
 - 3. Commanders
 - a. None of these had enough power, influence or armies to escape their punishment
 - 4. Even others who rebelled against God – free men and slaves, small and great – were helpless before the might of God.
 - iii. The feasting birds were not discerning of any of these – wealth or poverty, freedom or slavery – none of it mattered.
 - iv. This "supper of God" (v.17) is greatly distinguished from the "marriage supper of the Lamb" (v.9)
 - 1. The first is shadowed in gloom; the other bathed in heavenly light
 - 2. The guests at the first are scavenger birds; the guests at the other are a great multitude robed in white garments
 - 3. No music or singing is found at the first while the other is filled with music and the singing of songs
 - v. But in all...the scene of the grisly supper is not near as repulsive as hell itself will be...
 - 1. It is a frightful picture...and for good reason!
- g. The victory of Christ is seen in all its glory – and shows both that which is heavenly...and that which is horrendous!

THE BEAST AND THE FALSE PROPHET DOOMED (19:19-21)

X. Verse 19

- a. We reach the point in chapter 19 that is of primary importance – the downfall of the Lord’s two enemies: the beast and the false prophet
 - i. The beast is the “sea beast” introduced in 13:1,2 or the Roman Empire
 - ii. While both are destroyed, only the beast is specifically mentioned in verse 19 because he was the leader
- b. The Greek text literally says that the beast and his armies “assembled to make *the* war with the [One] sitting on the horse”
 - i. This is the war commonly known as “Armageddon” that was discussed in chapter 16
 - ii. It will also be mentioned again in chapter 20
 - iii. Again, as stressed in chapter 16, while the armies prepare and assemble for a great battle, *no battle ever occurs!*
 - iv. As Burton Coffman wrote:

“No ‘battle’ of any kind takes place here. The so-called Battle of Armageddon, as usually conceived, is nothing but man’s imagination. Christ needs no armies, whether of angels, or anyone else. His word which hurled the suns in space will execute his will when the time comes.”

Y. Verse 20

- a. The beast appeared strong, but as with most bullies, crumbled when he faced a superior force.
- b. This verse gives us strong evidence that the false prophet and the land beast are one in the same in 13:11-17
- c. “the lake...which burns with brimstone...”
 - i. This is the first reference but it will not be the last
 - ii. Revelation does not use the word “gehenna” – the literal word for “hell”
 1. It does use the word “hades” which is translated in some English texts as “hell” in Revelation
 2. “Hades” is the unseen world of the dead, not the place of eternal punishment known as “hell”
 3. Regardless, the Holy Spirit obviously had a final abode for the wicked in mind here (and again in chapter 20).

- d. Chapters 17 and 18 showed the head of this snake being destroyed (Rome)
 - i. Once the head was destroyed, the body (the Empire) could not survive long
- e. Perhaps most striking is just how quickly these two enemies were taken care of here – in fact, only one verse discusses it.
 - i. They were captured and then thrown alive into the eternal fire.
 - ii. The same fate will befall any who deliberately sin and live in opposition of God

Z. Verse 21

- a. This final verse accomplishes two purposes:
 - i. It tells of the fate of those who were deceived by the beast and the false prophet
 - ii. It fulfills the promise made by the angel to the birds
 - 1. "And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh."
- b. Once again, the futility of rebellion against God is shown and emphasized
- c. But the scene is not over...and the climax when the devil himself will be thrown into the lake of eternal fire is yet to come...

Chapter 20: THE SECOND DEATH